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ABSTRACT

The monograph details a process for evaluating programs for behaviorally disordered students as well as the results of that analysis. Initial chapters consider the establishment of criteria for well-conceptualized programs and review of a broad literature search on programs for this population. Difficulties are noted with minimal information on many components of 81 identified programs. A chapter on outcome summarized the 81 programs as a group according to quality of discussion on eight program criteria: philosophy, goals, population, entry, methods, exit, evaluation, and operations. Among findings were that exit criteria was the weakest element described, while methodology and operations discussions were the strongest. A final chapter cites questions raised by the data, including reasons for over-representation of mental health programs and programs for adolescents and the nuture of distinctions between programs and programming. Implications for teacher education and the sharing of professional information are considered. (CL)

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National Needs Analysis in

BEHAVIOR DISORDERS

More Questions Than Answers: Review and Analysis of Programs for Behaviorally Disordered Children and Youth

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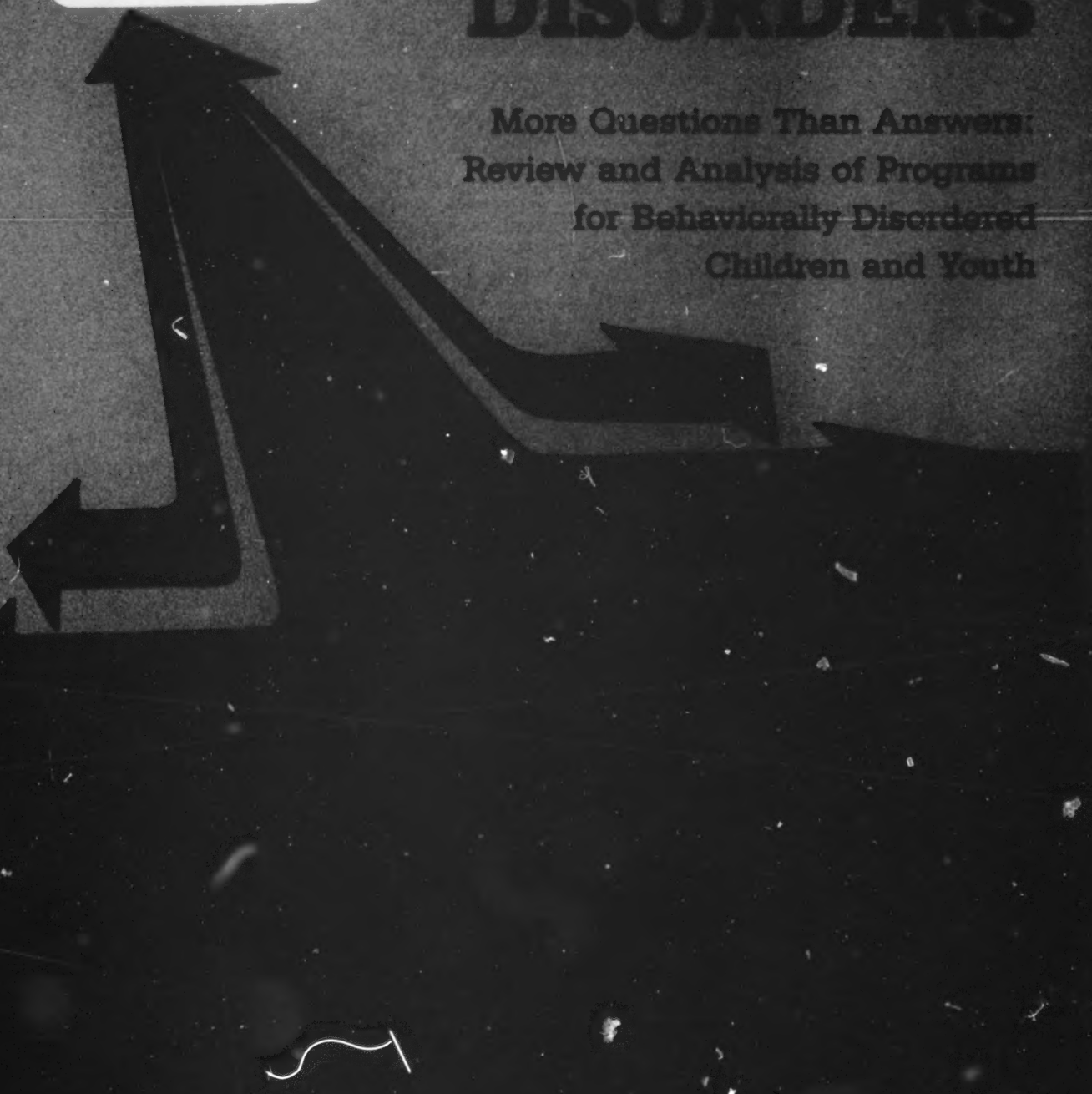

NATIONAL NEEDS ANALYSIS/LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROJECT

MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS: REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF PROGRAMS FOR BEHAVIORALLY DISORDERED CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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Columbia, Missouri, 1983

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Original Intentions

Over the past four years, the National Needs Analysis Project staff has collected data from a variety of sources and communicated at length and in depth with a wide range of professionals in the area of behavior disorders. Numerous reoccurring concerns have been expressed as part of that data collection process and by those professionals. Many of those concerns have been addressed in previous project publications. Outstanding among those concerns was one which was repeatedly considered important by virtually everyone with whom the staff talked. That issue was the description and evaluation of programs for behaviorally disordered children and youth. Any attempt to seriously address an issue of such magnitude requires an extensive commitment of time and energy. Nevertheless, with some trepidation and a large dose of naive enthusiasm, the National Needs Analysis Project selected that task as one of the major activities for 1982-1983.

The project staff initially conceived of an intense and rigorous effort that would involve a careful, indepth review of the full breadth of literature on program description and evaluation in the area of behavior disorders. A systematic process (see Chapter 2) was outlined to ensure such a rigorous and comprehensive effort. It was projected that in a year's time all relevant literature on programs for the behaviorally disordered would have been considered in depth and a document produced that discussed the types and ranges of programs for the behaviorally disordered as well as providing some evaluative discussion concerning those programs.

Altered Plans

After several months of work, it became apparent that the quality and breadth of the existing literature base called into question the reality of developing a valid discussion of programs in either a descriptive or an evaluative manner. If we may lapse into the informal, it is an understatement to say that we were discouraged and depressed. It was clear that, while the process we had pursued still appeared to be a good one, the literature base to which it was being applied was not. After numerous agonizing discussions between ourselves, the problem was presented to the interagency cadre of professionals who participate in the project's inservice phase.

While the project staff were resigned to the possibility of abandoning the effort, if need be, the professionals with whom we conferred encouraged us that there might be value in sharing both the process and its failure with the field. It was felt that such an analysis of the literature base was instructive, raised questions that needed to be considered and might provide useful direction for those currently adding to the literature base; hence, the publication you have before you.

Accordingly, Chapter 2 of this document discusses the literature review process as originally conceived and carried out. This will allow the reader to judge the usefulness and appropriateness of such a technique for reviewing the literature on the topic of programs for behaviorally disordered children and youth. Chapter 3 begins by summarizing the information that resulted from the process and closes with a discussion of the questions raised by that summary. Finally, Chapter 4 discusses some considerations that professionals in the field of behavior disorders might address in the future.

CHAPTER 2
DELINEATION OF THE PROCESS

Background

The last (and to our knowledge, only) major program efficacy and description study in the field of behavior disorders was completed in 1964 by Morse, Cutler and Fink. At that time they estimated that the 117 programs included in their study represented approximately 75% of the public school programs available. That number did not include non-public programs such as residential facilities, private placements, correction facilities, etc. Of the 117 programs in the study, 54 received site visits. Those 54 programs served 519 students. For the purposes of rough comparison, using that ratio, the entire sample of 117 programs served approximately 1,123 students. Taking this extrapolation one step further, if that figure (1,123) represents approximately 75% of the public school programs in 1964, then 1,497.6 pupils or about 1,500 students, is roughly indicative of the number of behavior disordered students served by the public schools.

By contrast, the Fourth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of Public Law 94-142 (1982) indicates that public schools served 348,954 seriously emotionally disturbed children in 1980-81. That is a growth rate of 99.4%. In other words, statistically speaking, virtually all services for behaviorally disordered children and youth have come into existence since the time of the Morse, Cutler and Fink study. Given those data, it seemed appropriate to review, via the literature, the area of programming in behavior disorders, both in program description and efficacy.

Criteria for a Program

The initial task was to determine what, exactly, constituted a program of service for behaviorally disordered children and youth for the purposes of

this endeavor. What differentiates a program from a set of ideas and/or a compilation of strategies? The work of McCauley (1977) appeared to provide the answer to that dilemma. McCauley proposed a set of program elements which he suggests should be reflected in a well-conceptualized program. That set of elements was found to be the most complete, yet flexible, of the options considered and, therefore, became the criteria for the literature review, i.e., the presence of most of those elements was deemed necessary to consider a given description as one of a program. This process is more fully explained in an upcoming section. While the final list of program elements/criteria and their descriptions presented below were varied slightly in some instances, they represent, primarily, the work of McCauley.

Description of Elements/Criteria

McCauley's assumption was adopted that there are eight essential elements of a well-conceptualized program. These include:

1. Philosophy or Ideational Context. A program for behaviorally disordered children and youth should have a well-articulated conceptual, philosophical and/or theoretical base which includes a definition of disturbance, a description of population needs and a rationale for the program which is expressed in statements of belief, assumptions and/or principles.

2. Program Goals. Program goals should include general aims and purposes of the program with specific, measurable objectives of that program (objectives for the clients are not a substitute). The goals should be consistent with the realities, that is, with the philosophical perspective, the methods selected, the population served and the environmental setting.

3. Population Definition. This program element includes a delineation of student characteristics and needs, eligibility issues, and the program/child match considerations.

4. Program Entry. A program for behaviorally disordered children and youth should: a) establish referral procedures (including referring persons or agencies, referral priorities, specification of referral steps, persons in the intake process and data to be included); b) establish identification procedures (including methods, persons involved and steps in the sequence); and c) adequately address due process issues (including parental involvement, child rights, data access, independent evaluations, negotiation of objectives and plans and the right to counsel).

5. Methods, Curriculum and Materials. In addition to establishing the parameters of the methods, curriculum, and materials, a program should describe those choices clearly, indicate their relationship to the program as a whole, delineate the role of the service provider within them, and organize them in such a manner that personnel can operate cohesively.

6. Exit Procedures. This element of a well-conceptualized program includes a delineation of a) criteria for success, b) the steps in the exit process, c) the persons who make exit decisions, and d) follow-up and tracking procedures.

7. Evaluation. Included here are evaluation of program components, evaluation of child progress, and delineation of the method for utilization of evaluation results for program change.

8. Program Operation. There are numerous related items that must be finalized in a complete program. These include: discussion of the physical facilities, including location and adequacy; delineation of program supervision and administrative responsibility; and consideration of financial issues, public relations efforts, replication possibilities, staffing issues, support personnel need and availability, and program size.

Application of Criteria

It was accepted from the onset that, while programs reflected in the literature might include these eight elements, they would not be included in as much detail as is implied in the above discussion. Rather, the element descriptions served as a guide to the range of information that might be present in a given source as proof of the fact that the element in question had been considered. Thus, the eight elements of a well-conceptualized program became the criteria for determining if a given article actually represented a program as opposed to a collection of ideas and/or strategies. The exact method of that process is discussed below.

Computerized Literature Search

The first step in the actual review process was to obtain a computerized literature search of all program description and efficacy related publications. The ERIC and ECER data systems were searched for all such publications from 1960 to the present. Search descriptors utilized were: program evaluation, program effectiveness, demonstration programs, program descriptions and alternative programs. Population descriptors utilized were: emotional disturbance, autism and behavior problems. That search yielded 703 resources for our consideration. Obviously, with such broad descriptors, there were

many entries not directly related to behavior disorders program description or evaluation.

First Level Sort

In order to determine those entries that were most likely to yield information on programs, it was necessary to conduct a first level sort in order to eliminate those entries clearly outside of the parameters of this review. Articles with a primary focus on these topics were eliminated: a) juvenile delinquency only; b) populations clearly not behaviorally disordered or emotionally disturbed; c) programs or strategies for prevention of behavior disorders; d) parent training programs; e) programs or strategies for pre-school children; f) preservice teacher education programs; and g) inservice teacher education programs. Of the original 703 entries, 246 were eliminated on this first sort. The remaining 457 entries were targeted for first-hand perusal. Due to the diligent effort of project support personnel, 365 of the 457 entries were obtained for perusal by project staff. Thus, project staff applied the process delineated below to 365 separate sources.

Adoption of Program Definition and Criteria

The next major step in the review process was to finalize the definition of a program and to adopt criteria for selecting from among the remaining 365 entries the articles to be included in the final review. These program elements, i.e., criteria, discussed in detail earlier are listed below. In brief, it was determined that in order to qualify as a program, as opposed to a strategy or a technique, the following elements must be discernable:

1. Philosophy or Ideational Context
2. Program Goals
3. Population Definition
4. Program Entry

5. Methods, Curriculum and Materials
6. Exit Procedures
7. Evaluation
8. Program Operation

As indicated previously, these elements were adapted from an article by McCauley (1977) in which he sets forth a listing of program elements.

After much discussion, it was determined that any literature entry would need to describe six out of the eight elements in order to be included in the final sample. The reason for this limit was threefold:

1. It is recognized that articles (perhaps because of sheer space limitations) do not always include descriptions of all program elements, even though they may be in place. Further, the state-of-the-art suggests that many behavior disorders programs are not as well-conceptualized as they might be and thus many complete programs might still lack an element or two;

2. By the same token, it was the writers' goal to insure that the review focused on total program aproaches to behaviorally disordered children and youth, culling out those strategies and techniques which, while useful, do not constitute total program approaches. For that reason, criteria needed to be sufficiently high to assure that those types of efforts were not selected; and

3. The reliability procedures followed by project staff confirmed that six out of eight elements as a criteria seemed to accurately distinguish programs from strategies and still allow some flexibility for the written presentation of the entries.

Reliability Checking

Since two researchers would be reviewing articles independently, it was important to ascertain that the same interpretation of criteria was being applied across researchers. Thus, the staff randomly selected ten articles and independently reviewed them against the program elements/criteria. In this subsequent comparison, the staff agreed on nine out of ten articles for a 90% reliability. In the process of comparing, each program element was re-examined for each article and additional discussion ensued concerning issues raised, problems encountered, etc. The staff then repeated this reliability checking with ten additional randomly selected articles. The reliability on that comparison was 100%. At that point the project staff felt comfortable to proceed independently.

Second Level Sort

The next step involved applying the program definition and criteria to the 365 sources that remained following the first level sort. As discussed, project staff proceeded independently on this task. Each source was examined in detail to determine if it met the criteria for inclusion in the review. Of the 365 sources, only 96 sources, representing 81 programs, were eventually selected as representing discussions of total program approaches for behaviorally disordered children and youth. Although earlier reliability between observers was excellent, the project staff decided to do periodic checking on "borderline" or problematic entries. Thus, the staff met periodically to make joint decisions on some of the sources. As was mentioned, 96 resources were eventually selected for inclusion in the final review.

Serious Questions Arise

Long before the second level sort was complete, it was obvious that there were serious problems. In general, program elements were so poorly described

in the literature that the criteria was met by the most minimal of discussions; for example: a) "The children were referred by classroom teachers" as the only statement concerning Program Entry; b) "A program for students with behavior problems" as the only statement concerning Population Definition; or c) "Follow-up indicates that most of our students have made progress" as the only statement regarding Evaluation. It was agreed that no matter how minimal, if the source spoke at all to a given element it would be considered to have been addressed. Even given such leeway, only 81 programs were identified out of the 365 reviewed. Clearly, the vast majority of resources in the literature base did not include even the most minimal of a program description. Further, of the 81 sources eventually identified as programs, the majority were embarrassingly weak in their description of numerous of the program elements. At this point it was clear to the project staff that these 81 programs were in no way representative of good examples of well-conceptualized programs according to the standards applied. Additionally, an unexpected result was what appeared to be an over-representation of adolescent programs compared to elementary ones and an over-representation of mental health programs compared to public school programs. By over-representation we are referring to the fact that these programs assumed a much larger percentage of the literature than they do of actual service delivery options. In light of all of the above, serious questions were raised regarding the validity of any subsequent analysis which described or evaluated programs or their element parts.

As indicated in Chapter 1, it became apparent that the task, as originally designed, must be abandoned or revamped. The re-definition is reflected in the content of this document. The next chapter will summarize the data briefly for the purpose of sharing its overall inadequacy.

CHAPTER 3
THE OUTCOME

Summary Data on Programs

Even after it was determined to alter the document's original course, there was still discussion concerning in what form, if any, the 81 selected programs should be discussed. Two alternatives were considered: (1) to summarize and evaluate the 81 programs but only when preceded by a lengthy discussion of the concerns and disclaimers regarding the programs' representativeness and generalizability. There was concern, however, that despite disclaimers reading audiences might still view the programs as "model" ones, or as examples of best practice. Since it was clear to us that such an interpretation was clearly inaccurate we were hesitant to pursue that alternative; or (2) to omit all mention of the 81 programs other than the process used to select them and the final number selected. Instead, the document could focus at length on the reasons for not including specific details and descriptions. The concern here is that readers are provided with so little information that nothing is gained beyond the fact that an extensive literature review led to discouragement and an unwillingness on the authors' part to share the problems.

Eventually, a middle course was selected. It was determined to summarize for the reader the 81 programs as a group without identifying any one program individually. In that manner it was possible to adhere to the new focus, i.e., a discussion of the literature base, in general, without endorsing or undermining individual programs.

To achieve this, project staff re-reviewed the 81 selected sources. On this review each program was evaluated on the thoroughness of the discussion of each of the program elements that served as criteria. Please Note: the rating was not based on the perceived quality of the content of the element

description, but on the perceived quality of the discussion of a given element. For example, an exemplary rating on philosophy does not mean that the staff perceived that the content of the philosophy was excellent, rather it means that the discussion of the philosophy was thorough. We are greatly concerned that the summary data may be misconstrued to mean that 20% of all programs have exemplary philosophy when, in fact, the interpretation is that 20% of the programs had excellent (thorough) discussions of philosophy. With that caveat, the summaries of the 81 selected programs appear in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Program Elements	Quality of Discussion by Percentage of the Total Selected Programs			
	Exemplary	Acceptable	Weak	Not Present
Philosophy	20%	26%	42%	12%
Goals	12%	25%	53%	10%
Population	12%	42%	46%	0%
Entry	15%	26%	42%	17%
Methods	28%	41%	31%	0%
Exit	9%	11%	28%	52%
Evaluation	25%	32%	26%	17%
Operations	22%	52%	17%	9%

Thus, of the 81 programs reviewed, 20% had thorough, i.e., exemplary, discussions of philosophy, 26% had acceptable discussions, 42% had weak discussions and 12% did not address program philosophy.

While it is probable that the reader will find most of the exemplary and acceptable percentages to be quite low, after reviewing the overall quality of the original 365 sources, project staff were surprised at how high some percentages were. None were lower than staff anticipated. A few observations

about this summary may be useful:

1. Program Evaluation percentages for exemplary (25%) and acceptable (32%) are higher than one might expect. However, one component of Program Evaluation is student progress evaluation and many programs used student progress as their sole measure of program evaluation.

2. The combined percentage of exemplary and acceptable Program Operations is quite high (22% + 52% = 74%) and very misleading. Program Operations were comprised of a large number of independent variables, e.g., facilities, funding, public relations, etc. Therefore, brief statements on each of several variables or an extended discussion of any one factor resulted in high marks when, in fact, the reader still had a limited understanding of the general program operations.

3. Exit Criteria as a program element is by far the weakest. Only 20% of the 81 programs had more than a sentence or two describing how students exited their program. Perhaps this is not surprising in light of the often leveled criticism that behaviorally disordered students are prone to be locked into programs and have great difficulty moving back into the mainstream.

4. Sixty-nine percent of all programs had exemplary or acceptable discussions of methodology. This fact, not a surprising one, has generated much discussion among project staff and project participants. In the opinion of the project staff and as supported by the percentages, it appears that methods are the most useful part of the literature base. The literature base, both the 81 selected programs and the remaining unselected sources, strongly reflects programming strategies rather than programs. While the common perception is that one may

turn to the literature to learn about programs for behaviorally disordered children and youth, it is more a reflection of reality that one may turn to the literature for programming. Perhaps, given the difficulty of program replication from one environment to the next, the latter is more useful. More discussion on this phenomenon will follow in the next section.

5. Table 2 summarizes the percentages a little differently. What is reflected is a collapsing of the percentages into two categories: (1) exemplary and acceptable, and (2) weak or not present. In very gross terms this reflects a dichotomy between acceptable versus not acceptable. Given that perspective, on four of the eight elements, over 50% of the selected programs had very poor or no discussions. Another two (Population and Evaluation) approach that. Of the two items, Methods and Program Operations, that appear to be well-discussed in the 81 programs, the latter is misleading. (Please see Number 2 for discussion.) Only the program element of Methods could be expected to be thoroughly discussed in most sources. Even so, 69% is not overwhelmingly impressive. Even if the literature is focusing primarily on programming as discussed in Number 4 above, it cannot be said to be doing it unusually well.

TABLE 2

Program Elements	Quality of Discussion by Percentage of the Total Selected Programs	
	Exemplary or Acceptable	Weak or Not Present
Philosophy	46%	54%
Goals	37%	63%
Population	54%	46%
Entry	41%	59%
Methods	69%	31%
Exit	20%	80%
Evaluation	52%	43%
Operations	72%	26%

Where does all this lead us? As the old joke goes, "There's some good news and some bad news." The good news is that a comprehensive look has now been taken at the current literature base in the field of behavior disorders in terms of program description and evaluation. The bad news is that there are now many more questions and no answers. The final chapter will consider where to go from here.

CHAPTER 4
QUESTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Questions Raised

What then did we learn from such a perusal of the literature and such "findings?" In addition to how to overcome despair, the project staff learned to ask questions. While literally hundreds might come to mind, the focus here is on a few that were found to be particularly troubling.

1. Why is the literature not reflective of practice? We know, and trust that readers also know, that there are in existence more programs in the field serving children and youth who are handicapped by their behavior than even the 365 which were encountered before the application of the eight program elements. Why are these programs not reflected in the literature? Do they evolve too quickly to ever be committed to paper? Is there no one connected with the program who has the time and/or inclination to share it in written form? Are the programs just not fully conceptualized, i.e., having most if not all of the program elements in place? Are most services to behavior disordered students a collection of programming strategies which have never been conceived as part of a total program approach? Given the difficulty of replicating programs in other environments, is it of concern that total program descriptions are not well reflected in the literature?

2. Why do mental health programs appear to be over-represented in the literature? The vast majority of behaviorally disordered students are served in public school classes, yet the majority of programs reflected in the literature are mental health and/or

private programs. Is this merely a function of the relative newness of public school programs for the behaviorally disordered? Are public school environments totally unconducive to the preparation of materials for publication? How can the inclusion of public school programs in the literature be effected?

3. Why are programs for adolescents disproportionately represented in the literature? Public school programs usually have a few more elementary programs or, in some cases, have approximately equal numbers of elementary and adolescent programs. Yet, programs for the behavior disordered adolescent dominate the literature (in our selected sample, slightly over 2 to 1). Do job descriptions vary for persons involved in adolescent programs allowing them the opportunity to share programs in a written fashion? Does the field feel that they have elementary programs "under control" but are still searching at the adolescent level? Are more adolescent programs funded by grants which then have a greater tendency to have a written expression of the program? Finally, is there any relationship between the representation of mental health programs and adolescent programs? Perhaps the adolescent representation is merely a reflection of the mental health representation. At the time of data collection, the staff did not tally the number of adolescent programs there were descriptions of mental health programs versus the number that were descriptions of public school programs. However, staff recollections coincide: that the vast majority of adolescent programs described were mental health programs. If the literature over-represents mental health programs and mental health programs publish more

about their adolescent programs, then the adolescent over-representation would not be as puzzling.

4. What exactly are the distinctions between programs and programming? Was our concept of programs unrealistic? Unnecessary? Off-target? Is programming sufficient to meet student needs? Do programming options constitute programs?

It is obvious that (1) the questions that could have been raised following this past year's work are infinite. We selected some of those that were most concerning to us; and (2) the options for more detailed discussions that arise from those questions are equally infinite. Again, we have selected those that are particularly troubling to us based on our own work and the work of those persons who have been the advisors, participants and data sharers for this project. Below, the reader will find three brief discussions that raise the concerns we have experienced as a result of the attempt at review and analysis of programs for the behaviorally disordered.

Reliance on the Literature for Guidance

What are the implications of this endeavor and its results for: (1) using the literature base in teacher training at all levels, but especially at the graduate level; and (2) using the literature as a starting place in program development?

It is not only customary, it goes virtually without question, that graduate students will be "sent to" the literature base to learn about and synthesize a variety of issues in the area of behavior disorders. Based upon the data we saw, while one might support that approach for programming strategies, it would be difficult for these authors to continue supporting it as a vehicle for teaching about program descriptions or program efficacy. If,

in fact, graduate students should pursue those topics, from where will that information come? From original research? From extended and varied internships or site visits? From mentors? Many graduate students are familiarized with a single, successful program at or near their place of training. If that is to be the only good, indepth information that a graduate student receives about programs, it will be difficult for behavior disorders, as a field, to grow beyond provincial and/or dichotomized perceptions on program options for behaviorally disordered children and youth. Instead, the field gets disciples for a program, but little knowledge of programs.

Similarly, the use of the literature base as a point of departure not only for descriptive but also for efficacy information to be utilized in program development is called into question. In fact, we learned that two of our colleagues in state department of education roles went to the literature in an effort to select a general set or sets of orientation for the development and sophistication of behavior disordered programs in their state. They left the process convinced that it offered little guidance for the philosophical issues in program development much less the implementation issues. If not in the literature, where? What guidance is available to persons whose job it is to direct and influence program development on a large scale?

Conceptual Framework vs. Compiled Techniques

One of the most troubling questions that has arisen concerns the issue of programs vs. programming. Have we, the authors, or we, the field, lost perspective on the relative value of programs vs. programming? Could it be more useful for the literature to reflect programming rather than programs? If so, what is the appropriate way to share programs? If programming is the more valuable content, where is the guidance for combining assorted strategies into a unified whole?

Some of our colleagues have cogently argued that the field is unnecessarily concerned about programs. That, in fact, programming strategies are our only necessary tool. If a child has been carefully evaluated and his/her strengths and weaknesses determined, the most appropriate step is to select the strategies needed to speak to each of those strengths and weaknesses. Not only is this approach the most functional one, but it avoids the hazards of fitting children into preconceived programs that perpetuate philosophical dichotomies in the field.

Despite the good common sense of that perspective, something in these authors continues to argue that a compilation of programming strategies cannot be a total substitute for a strong conceptual framework, be that psycho-educational, behavioral, or eclectic. Is it possible for a program to state a specific philosophy, its goals, methods, etc. and still draw from all the programming strategies available in the field?

We think we are too biased to seek an honest answer to the above question. However, we can state some facts: (1) the literature is not reflective of well-conceptualized programs; and (2) the literature is stronger in reflecting programming strategies. The question remains: does that fact represent actual practice in the field? If so, then the question is apparently resolved in practice in favor of focusing on programming despite the lip service that is given to programs. If the literature does not reflect practice then the other major concerns raised apply. One further point to consider is that while the literature is more reflective of programming, it is still not unusually strong in that area, either (see page 14, number 5).

How is Information Shared?

If, as this literature review appears to indicate, the literature base is not reflecting programs in behavior disorders and is only doing a fair job

of reflecting programming in behavior disorders, then is literature the primary vehicle for sharing information in the field of behavior disorders? Perhaps the literature is such a poor reflection of practice because it is not utilized as the major source of information sharing. If that is the case, then what are the information sharing arrangements beyond the obvious teacher training and/or graduate experiences? Do conferences fulfill that need? Is it chance "word-of-mouth?" Are informal methods of information sharing as valuable, or more so, than formal ones? Or, perhaps the literature is a poor reflection of practice because professional journals and their reviewers do not encourage manuscripts of a descriptive nature, preferring instead more empirical data on various programming strategies. The push to "be more scientific" may have resulted in selection of experimental research manuscripts which are undoubtedly "cleaner" from a research standpoint than are program descriptions and efficacy studies.

One of the major concerns about the method and amount of information shared is that of replication. While informal methods of information sharing are useful, perhaps more useful than formal ones to practitioners, the lack of formal information sharing through the literature seriously limits the field's ability to replicate either programs or programming techniques. Without well-conceptualized and described programs or programming strategies, replication is not possible. Without replication, services run the risk of becoming provincial, narrow and/or "re-inventing the wheel." In the long run, replication aids efficiency and efficiency allows more effort to be focused on proactive planning of programs or programming strategies.

As a point of interest, these authors are curious about the quality and comprehensiveness of the literature base in other areas of special education, not for the reasons as some may suspect, that misery loves company (although it sometimes does). Rather, it would be useful in our search for answers to know

if the field of behavior disorders is unique in these problems or if they are shared by the field of special education generally.

Conclusion

It is hoped that this document might serve as a stimulus to professionals in the field of behavior disorders to consider the questions raised and to begin posing some answers/alternatives. There has obviously been no such attempt here. Frankly, these authors have been overwhelmed by merely positing the questions!

At heart is an assumption held by these authors and shared, we think, by our colleagues that the literature base is an evergrowing repository of the wisdom of the field that is available to assist and guide us as we strive to provide services to children and youth who are handicapped by their behavior. Our experience has not supported this assumption, at least as it relates to program description and efficacy. We are anxious that: (1) the assumption be re-examined and (2) the questions raised stimulate thought in order that the field can re-evaluate and address the concerns.

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